



# OPINION

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## It Only Takes One *The racial double standard at work*

BY LEE A. DANIELS

It only takes one.

It only takes one black American who has done something wrong – or has been

accused of doing something wrong – and that special group of people comes charging out of the woodwork.

You know who I mean: those people – be they white, black or other – who seize on the flimsiest of straws to make wholesale negative ethnic-based generalizations about black people, black culture and black institutions.

They're at it again now, using the allegations of scandalous behavior made against Bishop Eddie Long, the Atlanta-based megachurch celebrity preacher, to issue all-inclusive condemnations of the so-called homophobia of "the black church."

I myself find it difficult to be tolerant of any individual or any institution that declares homosexuality a sin. Some of my best friends are gay... And when I was an adolescent looking to the



Civil Rights Movement for spiritual sustenance and guidance, I knew that two of my intellectual heroes, James Baldwin and Bayard Rustin, were homosexual.

My point here is not about what Bishop Long did or did not do. Nor is it about his past public pronouncements on homosexuality.

Rather, it's about the hypocrites in the forum of public opinion who practice the racist double standard that still infects so much of the discourse. Several "white" religious denominations – Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal – have been rocked over the past decade by controversies about the place of gays and lesbians within them or by the exposure of pedophile priests or ministers in their ranks. But you can scan the mainstream media and blogosphere about these controversies until your eyes cross and not find any reference to tolerance for homosexuality as a "problem of the white church."

Why is that? We know why it

is, and it has nothing to do with the fact that there are black congregants within these white denominations.

I don't deny that homophobic attitudes may be strongly held among some black churchgoers. Of course, that would be so, given the deep-rootedness of the stigma among human beings about same-sex relationships. But, despite the visibility of some black ministers in opposing same-sex relationships and marriage, there is nothing in black churchdom or in black American society at large to compare to the breadth and virulence of homophobia that, for all the progress made in the acceptance of homosexuality as a normal human condition, remains evident in white America.

Who is blocking repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell?" It's not black Americans. Which black preacher and congregation, however far out on the fringe, compares with the odious Fred W. Phelps, Sr. and his family flock at Westboro Baptist

Church, who is profiled in the current issue of Time Magazine.

Some cite the Pew Research Center poll of last October as evidence that blacks deserve special condemnation. The survey found that 66 percent of blacks oppose same-sex marriage and 64 percent think homosexuality morally wrong. The comparable numbers for whites were 52 percent and 48 percent. But it's an assertion that, at best, can be characterized as disingenuous.

For one thing, in contrast to what exists among whites at the local, state and national levels, among black elected officials, clergy, or the general population, there is no organized opposition of any power to the expansion of the civil rights of gays and lesbians.

For another, translating the Pew survey percentages to hard numbers suggests quite a different perspective on the matter: The roughly two-thirds of black Americans who oppose homosexuality come to about 24 mil-

lion of the 37 million blacks in America. The 48 percent of the roughly 225 million whites in America who feel the same way equal about 108 million people.

This analysis makes it clear whose opposition presents the greater barrier to gays and lesbians realizing their full human rights.

Certainly, Bishop Eddie Long's career illuminates certain facets of the evangelical, charismatic style of preaching that have captured the allegiance of millions of Americans of all kinds who attend megachurches either in person or via technology. And some of those things may even be particularly representative of aspects of the culture of black American churches. But expressing intolerance toward others or preying upon the vulnerable aren't.

And anyone who says so is just whistling Dixie.

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## Offshoring America's Legal Jobs

### Add to the category of good jobs disappearing

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

Maybe you're one of the thousands of young lawyers in America working in some low-skill, part-time job because law firms have cut so many of the starting positions you were educated to take. If so, I have good news:

Jobs for young lawyers are now mushrooming in companies that provide legal services to U.S. corporations.

Unfortunately, you'll have to move to India to get one. And the pay will be--how shall I put this?--disappointing.

Lawyering has become the latest category of good jobs disappearing from our Land of the Free as corporate chieftains continue to off-shore the American workplace. Wall Street banks, insurance corporations, mining giants, and others are shipping more and more of their law business to Pangea3, CPA Global, UnitedLex, and other rapidly expanding legal outsourcing outfits in India.



In the past five years the number of these upstart firms has more than tripled, with each one offering from a few dozen to hundreds of young Indian law school graduates. These eager legal

beagles are hunkered down in corporate cubicles, ready to write contracts, review legal documents, and--increasingly--to handle the more sophisticated chores of case management and regulatory filings that corporations have been entrusting to more experienced American lawyers.

Even though U.S. corporations have amassed record levels of profits and cash reserves, they are offshoring their legal work simply because it puts even more money in their pockets. They can pay Indian lawyers as little as a tenth of what they'd pay young American attorneys--and the 90-percent wage difference goes to the corporation, rather than being spread through our economy as family incomes.

It's another move by the corporate elite to separate their expanding fortunes from the well-being of America's middle class--and from the well being of America itself.

*Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker.*

The Portland Observer Established 1970

USPS 959-680

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington

EDITOR: Michael Leighton

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER: Mark Washington

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt

WEB EDITOR: Jake Thomas

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer,  
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